Schoolmaster B-3 (1930-1931) 1934 FIA Dundee FIA

A comet is a sign of coming famine, not merely for the person who sees it, but for everybody.

This short statement may not seem to imply a very great use of magical practices. Nevertheless it is clear from the general trend of knowledge of the Dundee that the important parts of their life are helped and controlled by magic. The recovery of ritual status after child-birth and after the birth of twins is achieved by magical means; the spirit-name given to a child is intended to link it, in a way that can quite properly be called magical, with the spirit-world, so that it starts life on good terms with these powerful and capricious beings; the whole idea of circumcision (even if it is borrowed) is that of the transition by means of a magico-religious performance from the state of boyhood to that of manhood; these and other observances and ordinances are all magic, and are done because people believe that by doing them they will be enabled to go on existing.

(c) Analysis of Beliefs

Ritual Values. Things which have ritual value fall into three categories: (1) things which provide sustenance, or are closely connected with such things; (2) things of the spirit world; (3) things used to restore ritual status.

(1) Honey is sacred, like milk to the Nandi; and in addition to the taboos on eating honey and fruit on the same day, trees, flowering plants, and grass have ritual value because they are all closely connected with the provision of honey: trees, because bees live in them; flowers, because bees get honey from them; and grass, because the flowers and trees may be damaged if it is burned. The last notion means that within the pastoral tribes, the Dundee do not burn grass near forest.

(2) The spirits are offered honey and honey-wine, which thereby acquire an additional value in that their use is directed to both the dead and the living.

(3) Things used for the recovery of damaged ritual status include goats and sheep, and certain of their products, i. e. eyes, and fat, as well as 'butter' or wood ash (ought from cows. All these come from sources which formerly were hardly possessed at all by most Dundee, and even to-day only on a small scale. Honey-wine is used a good deal, as well as white earth.

Each period of life has what might be called a standard ritual status, which is changed to a different standard on circumcision, when a boy becomes a man and a girl a woman, with the right to marry and produce children. The ritual status of normal adults is altered under certain conditions: (1) a man setting out to hunt is not in the same ritual state as when he is staying quietly at home, and he must not have sexual intercourse at such a time, i. e. just before he starts or, should he have an opportunity, while away; (2) a person sick of an illness has a status different from that of other people; (3) touching a corpse causes deterioration of ritual status; (4) the breaking of a taboo affects ritual status; (5) women suffer deterioration of ritual status through the birth of a child before marriage, the birth of twins, and even, to a lesser extent, normal birth. In all cases, the status must be restored by a ritual performance.

Schwerdtfeger B-5 (1938-1939) 1954 FLA Dembo FLA

[illegible] Maintenance of ritual relations with the spirits is effected by the recognized offerings made to them; and with 'nature', on which the food supply depends, by other means (see below).

The World Order. In the myths related at the beginning of § 5, the thunder plays an important part, and is even portrayed as a man. One might almost assume from this that he was believed to be an earth-dweller who began a second life in the sky as the thunder-god who controls the rain, for the notions of rain, mist, and thunder are all interwoven, and the rainbow is "the arm of the man who draws water for him". These myths reflect the Dorobo attitude of the people to their surroundings. One of the chief features of the forest is heavy rain and frequent mist, and it would be surprising if we did not find among them the conception of some sort of rain-being who brought mist. Again, since rain is plentiful and drought rare, the rainmaker is not needed, and although the lowest known rainfall, 30 inches in 1933 at a place two miles from the edge of the forest (and probably a little higher in the forest), would indeed constitute a drought year elsewhere, in the absence of [illegible] crops and cattle an occasional low rainfall does not matter so long as there is enough to make the plants flower. Even a heavy rainfall of 70 inches or over does no more than cause temporary inconvenience where there are no crops to be damaged and the slopes prevent flooding. The Tinderet forest is, in fact, an ideal place for hunters to live in. However prolonged the dry season, the conditions for wild life are better there than in the open plains below, and low rainfall has never yet prevented a supply of game to hunt or trap. Whether the people are able to kill enough game to ensure a supply of food is another matter, and the inter-relations in not so much that between man and nature in general, but between man and the animals. Man's wrong-doing is thought to produce either a failure of the supply of animals, or his inability to kill or catch what is there in abundance.

Social Values. Things which are important to man because they are indispensable to him have what is called a social value as well as a ritual value, because between man and them there is created a relationship which man must maintain if he is not to suffer. The food supply of a hunting people is got from day to day and depends on the skill of the hunter. It is uncertain, because on any given day the hunter may not find game, or having found it may not kill. But precarious as such a life might seem, there is no evidence that in the past there was often any great scarcity from either of these two causes. The old men say, in fact, that whereas food is scarce under present-day conditions, in the old days when hunting was not restricted it was, if not always abundant, at least enough. Such a statement is not, I think, merely an exaggerated memory of better days, the outcome of a longing to get back to the forest, but it explains in part the otherwise remarkable paucity of hunting magic and ritual procedure. Some hunting magic there certainly was, and fear and ignorance prevent few talk about it; but it is clear that where the food supply throughout the centuries is found adequate,

433 the absence of pastoral and agricultural industries and knowledge, by their myths, and in fact by everything about them. To-day it is true that they are becoming agriculturalists, as the following analysis of their economic activities will show:

			Part :	—	Part : — Total :
[462] [594]	Family	Men :	Trapping game in the forest Making weapons, honey-barrels, etc. Some : working for wages		Cultivation of shambas
		Women :	Preparing the results of trapping Making baskets, skin clothes, etc. Housework and food collecting		Cultivation of shambas
[857]		Children :	Minding Hunting Housework		
[845]		Man living Alone :	Trapping Making clothes Preparing the results of trapping Cooking, housework		Cultivation of shambas

[856] Dundas like Cranham converges on cultivation, with a hunting background, and stock in view as the ultimate achievement. For though the hunting instinct is still very much alive, and though a great deal of time is now spent on cultivation, there is no doubt that the Dundas (in 1939 at least) had a fundamental economy in their minds as the ultimate goal.

5. Economic Activities

a) Beekeeping

462 Honey is to the Dundas what milk is to the Kamâ. It is much-sought
[594] food has a high ritual value, in consequence of which certain rules must be
observed lest the supply fail. A person must not eat fruit or blood on the same
[291] day that he has eaten honey, though he or she may eat meat. After eating
[464] honey, bits of the comb must not be left lying on the ground, but must be
hidden in the undergrowth. Army Mbiti said, somewhat unsatisfactorily, that
the reason for this was "that other people shall not see them and so be led to
your honey-barrel". But this is probably not the true reason, which may be
[791] either simply respect to the honey, from a fear that if treated disrespectfully
the supply will fail; or else fear of a witch putting a spell on the bees or honey

succ cont'd

Succession is patrilineal and marriage patrilocal. Polygyny is practised. The lineage is a functional continuum, including ancestral spirits as active members while they are still remembered by the persons responsible (so to speak) for keeping them alive by acts of memory and communion, the continuum being of the perpetually successive rather than of the periodically recurrent type, that is to say, a boy is his father's second self rather than his grandfather or great-grandfather born again.

Initiation includes a circumcision rite for boys and a pre-marital rite of clitoridectomy for girls. Age-grading is based on male initiation. There are no generation-ages except in so far as the Dorobo imitated or joined in the moiety of the Kikuyu and the moiety of the Masai. The word they use for the handing-over ceremony is *muomati*. Alternating ages or generations are distinguished as *ruoi ej-tai* (the right hand) and *ruoi ej-kerop* (the left hand). When the Kikuyu system is referred to *Mwongi* is the former and *Mwiru* the latter, but the expressions were probably used originally of the Masai right-hand and left-hand circumcision groups.

There are no indigenous chiefs, the judiciary and legislature being a council of elders. Each an elder is called *kiranguinde* (pl. *kirungit*). A *kiranguinde* has much the same function as a Kikuyu *muthamaki*. There is no *kiboro* but formerly the Dorobo owed allegiance to the *kiboro* of the Masai.

They recognise one Supreme Being, called *Tororit* (compare the Suk *Tororut*). There appears to be no cult of so-called Sun Worship. The sacred trees, used for prayers to Tororit, are, for rain the bamboo (a solitary clump), for honey the *mukoo*, and, in connection with circumcision ceremonies, the *mutiligi* and the *mumetuiyo*.

79. Little or nothing is known of the relationship of the Dorobo of Southern Kikuyu with other Dorobo sections. The "Dorobo Committee" called them the Kikuyu Development group, and remarked that they were first found in the Aberdares but left there and went to the Masai Reserve, whence they were ejected. At the time the Committee sat this group was living at forest squatters in the